

**Department of Parks**  
**Director's Report**  
**Thursday, January 12, 2012**

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- **Visitation at Parks Facilities During Holiday Season** (*the Department of Parks was open and did not experience a 5-day shutdown*)
- **Riley/Bolten House at Josiah Henson Special Park Added to National Register of Historic Places**
- **Chief Archaeologist from “Uncle Tom’s Cabin Heritage Site” visits Josiah Henson Special Park**
- **Meadowside Nature Center Welcomes Rescued Red-tailed Hawk**
- **Facilities Management Staff Work to Streamline Park Rental House Program**
- **Park Projects Update: Commuter Biker Trail between Cedar Lane and Elmhirst Parkway, Trash and Debris Clean Up in Rock Creek Stream Valley, Capital View-Homewood Playground**

**EVENTS**

- JANUARY 9-10 – Registration begins for Summer Camps throughout Montgomery Parks. Residents on January 9<sup>th</sup>; all others start on January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- JANUARY 14 – Ladies Hike Out, Black Hill Regional Park, 10:00 am-11:30 am
- JANUARY 14 – Cultural Resources Volunteer Appreciation Lunch, Agricultural History Farm Park, 11:00 am
- JANUARY 14 – Come Play in the Parks Day, Wheaton Ice Arena, 11:30 am–2:00 pm
- JANUARY 14 – Wheaton Winter Ice Show, Wheaton Ice Arena, 4:00 pm -6:00 pm
- JANUARY 16 – Park Play Day, Cabin John Ice Rink and Wheaton Ice Arena, 9am – 5pm.
- JANUARY 21-22 – Registration begins for February Tennis Classes. Residents on January 21, all others start on January 22.
- JANUARY 23 – Park Play Day, Cabin John Ice Rink and Wheaton Ice Arena, 9am – 5pm.
- JANUARY 24 – 2012 PROS Plan Update, Downcounty Public Meeting, MRO, 7:00 pm -8:30 pm.
- JANUARY 25 – 2012 PROS Plan Update, Up-county Public Meeting, Up-County Government Center, 7:00 pm-8:30 pm
- JANUARY 25 – Nature Matters Lecture Series: Lake Needwood Management and Restoration, Meadowside Nature Center, 6:30 pm -8:30 pm
- JANUARY 29 & 30 - Summer Camp Expo, White Flint Mall, 10:00 am-5:00 pm Saturday; noon-5:00 pm Sunday
- FEBRUARY 1 – Weed Warriors, Capital Crescent Trail, 10:00 am -11:30 am
- FEBRUARY 4, 11, 18, 25 – “A Walk in Father Henson’s Footsteps’ Guided Tours in honor of Black History Month, Josiah Henson Special Park, noon-4:00 pm
- FEBRUARY 7- Weed Warriors, Ovid Hazen Wells Recreational Park, 9 am-11 am
- FEBRUARY 8 – Weed Warriors, Underground Railroad Trail, 10 am-noon
- FEBRUARY 10 – Sweetheart Skate, Wheaton Ice Arena, 8:00 pm-10:00 pm
- FEBRUARY 11 – Sweetheart Skate, Cabin John Ice Rink, 8:30 pm-10:30pm

## NEWS

- Parks facilities were busy throughout the holiday season with regular programs and special events attracting plenty of visitation:
  - This was the Garden of Lights' best year yet for attendance, drawing just over 10,000 cars and approximately 40,000 visitors between November 25 and January 8, 2012. More than \$200,000 in revenue was collected from the event.
  - The Train Exhibit in the Conservatory holiday display recorded daily attendance at 12,200 from November 25 and January 8, 2012; this is *in addition to* the Garden of Lights attendance figures.
  - Despite warmer-than-average weather revenues at the ice rinks remained consistent with last year's numbers. Registration for the Winter I classes offered at the ice rinks included 1489 students at Cabin John Ice Rink and 602 students at Wheaton Ice Arena. The Holiday Skating Spectacular at Cabin John Ice Rink was magic on ice with 92 skaters participating and over 300 spectators.
  - Park Play Days were a popular program during the holiday school break with 74 children attending programs at Cabin John Ice Rink and 62 children attending Wheaton Ice Arena.
  - Wheaton Tennis held the first annual Wheaton Winter Tennis Tournament over the New Year weekend. More than 80 people participated in the tournament and 30+ spectators watched the tournament matches.
- The Riley/Bolten House, a historic structure located within Josiah Henson Special Park, was added to the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places. In addition to honoring sites that meet the highest criteria for significance, the National Register also encourages preservation of historic properties through planning, public awareness, federal and state tax incentives and grants.
- The Archaeology Program welcomed the chief archaeologist from "Uncle Tom's Cabin Heritage Site" in Ontario, Canada to Josiah Henson Special Park on January 4<sup>th</sup> where they compared archaeological investigations.
- On December 9, 2011 Meadowside Nature Center acquired a new education bird. The Red-tailed Hawk, believed to be a male, was found in 2009 by local Raptor Rehabilitator Suzanne Shoemaker. He was severely emaciated and dehydrated and had limited flight capabilities. Although he is now healthy, he still has limited flight capability and would not be able to survive on his own in the wild. Ms. Shoemaker has cared for the bird since 2009 and felt Meadowside Nature Center would provide the perfect permanent home for the hawk. He is doing well and is currently in training so that he can be used for educational programs.
- The Facilities Management Division is working hard to find tenants for four vacant park rental houses. Currently 32 of 36 park rental houses are occupied. Staff is ensuring emergency and non-emergency maintenance requests made by park house tenants are documented and appropriately

dispatched for response. Their 24/7 park tenant service line has fielded 90 calls for service since July 1, 2011, ranging from issues related to heat, water infiltration, insects and pests, and minor electrical, carpentry and plumbing repairs. Emergency calls are routed for immediate response 24 hours, 7 days per week; non-emergency calls are typically addressed within one business day.

- Course offered by Montgomery Parks for children 14 and under can now be found on a new local website that allows parents to search for nearby activities and programs.  
[www.ActivityRocket.com](http://www.ActivityRocket.com)
- Brookside Gardens received the following donations: River Hill Garden Center donated \$4,000 after naming Brookside as the beneficiary of their annual holiday open house. The Brookside Gardens Chapter of the Azalea Society of America donated \$12,656 after the Azalea Society disbanded. Funds will be directed to improvements in the Azalea Garden.
- The Garrett Park Nursery School is in the process of relocating to their renovated building in Garrett Park. In October 2010, the Garrett Park Nursery School rented one of the empty park activity buildings (Ken-Gar) as a temporary building while their building was renovated as part of the redevelopment of the Garrett Park Elementary School and the former Park recreation building. The Department extends its appreciation to the staff of Garrett Park Nursery School for being such good tenants and neighbors at the Ken Gar Park.
- The Department recently approved Verizon Wireless's plans to collocate their telecommunications facility at the existing AT&T tower at the Wheaton Maintenance Yard. This new collocation will generate a new annual fee in the amount of \$36,000.
- The Department will soon receive a reimbursement of \$71,306.80 from the State Highway Administration as part of an agreement to allow the SHA to receive impervious area credit on Park property. Last summer, Parks removed 30 tons of contaminated soil before completing the demolition and site reclamation project at the property located at 2831 Spencerville Road, in Burtonsville (in the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area).
- The Department will receive reimbursement of \$48,716.50 from the Commission's self-insurance fund for storm damages to the Potomac Horse Center dating back to July 25, 2010.
- Staff from both Parks and from Planning continues to work with MCPS to help improve the site selection process for new schools and on options for renovations of older schools.
- The Montgomery Parks Foundation is planning a future retreat, and is implementing policies to support its fund-raising goals.
- Deer management has begun in the Sligo stream valley area.
- Staff conducted a Parks Friends Group Roundtable meeting with park managers, leadership, and outside experts to review models of successful governance and relationships with such groups, and to chart a course for management and future growth.
- We began to reinstitute the standing Ballfield Coordination meetings with the Recreation Department and have now included CUPF in those meetings.

- Parks staff has been monitoring/attending the County Executive's public FY 13 Operating Budget Forums.
- The Maryland Soccer Foundation, which manages the 22-field Maryland SoccerPlex at South Germantown Recreational Park, was recognized by the Montgomery County Council with a proclamation on Dec. 13, 2011, for having its 3,200-seat stadium field named school/park national "Field of the Year" by the Sports Turf Manager Association.

## **Park Projects Updates**

### **Completed:**

- The commuter bikers trail from Cedar Lane to Elmhirst Parkway has been completed and is in use.
- The playground renovation at Capitol View Homewood Neighborhood Park has been completed and additional new play equipment was installed.
- Parks staff removed hundreds of plastic bottles and plenty of floating trash and debris trapped between two huge trees in Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit #2.
- Over the past year, Horticulture, Forestry and Environmental Education Division staff composted more than one million pounds of landscape debris from parks. Staff also completed 10 athletic field renovations and so far this planting season has dug over 600 trees to be transplanted county wide.
- Cultural Resources and Facilities Management staff worked together to custom-order windows for Meadowbrook Recreation Center (Candy Cane City) based on historic photographs from the 1940s. The newly installed windows return the building to its historic character.
- Park maintenance and Park Police staff met with community leaders on-site at Long Branch – Wayne Local Park, and they were pleased with the number of improvements that have been made in the last few months. The large athletic field there is currently closed for renovation.

### **In Progress:**

- The RC131-Fish Passage Construction project at Meadowbrook was temporarily shut down by the contractor but will resume in late spring. The construction project has forced the closure of fields #5 and #6 to all sporting activities until completion of the project for safety reasons.
- Staff is working in the Beach Drive Maintenance Area to plant more than 200 trees.

*Mary R. Bradford*

*Director*